Don't Miss An Issue!

SUBSCRIBE TO RTN . . .

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS
P. O. BOX 9007
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94709

Send RTN for _____ year(s) at $10.50 per year or $5.25 for 6 months. My remittance is enclosed. This is:
a new _____ renewal/extension _____ gift _____.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

FIRST CLASS

To:

FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

First Class

FIRST CLASS
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1083
BERKELEY, CA.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

45¢

VOL. 9 NO. 6
MAY 1979
ISSUE NO. 188

THE DEMOBILIZATION OF AMERICA

Letters

People with Amtrak experiences like that of Scoutmaster Allan Toub of New Jersey (last issue) certainly have a gripe, but I wish they'd stop the "no one cares at Amtrak" stuff. I don't mind people saying some Amtrak people don't care or even most Amtrak people don't care (tho I wouldn't believe that). But let's stop the exaggeration--the fact is, some Amtrak people care a lot--anyone who travels more than once a year is likely to see and experience hard-working Amtrak people. I have seen a wide range of quality in Amtrak employees--and that's the problem. The surly, inattentive ones have to go; the good ones know it too, but can't do much about it.

Besides some excellent Amtrak employees, I've seen fantastic work by the operating railroads' employees, most recently Chessie conductor Otto Weber on the CARDINAL. We saw him on roundtrips five days apart, so his easy-going, friendly personality apparently is not limited to one trip. And best of all for us, Otto help make up enough time coming into Chicago despite being 2 hours down when getting on in Peru and having to drop a business car that we made our bus connection by 10 minutes. Otto told us, "People would ride these things if we ran 'em on time. But we don't," he added, shaking his head with disgust. I for one would ride them even if they ran late if I could have people like Otto Weber operate the trains.

I know it's tempting to exaggerate when rude or ignorant employees botch things up. But "no Amtrak people care" is an unnecessary slight to the excellent workers who try to give us good service despite Amtrak's myriad problems.

Den Adler
Janesville, Wisconsin

Texas was not the first state to oppose the DOT's Final System Plan--it was merely the first state to oppose the plan with a Concurrent Resolution. The Oregon Senate opposed the cutback in Senate Memorial 1 adopted Feb 20 by a vote of 29-0 (one senator, Bullock of Portland, excused).

And more is to come: Senator Burbridge of Salem believes the Legislature will approve a 2-year Demonstration Project that will have an SPV-2000 trainset making two roundtrips daily between Springfield and Portland at fares competitive with the two bus lines.

Clark Winston Cox Jr., Chairperson
Eugene Chapter, Oregon ARP
Eugene, Oregon

Evidently they still have some airline employees down there in Washington, because in February I took the NATIONAL LIMITED and now find that we have a paper pillow case and a paper towel. It is bad enough that we have chopped-up plastic for a pillow and plastic or sponge rubber that is hot for a mattress. If one tries to rub the paper in one's beard off with a paper towel, one just adds more paper to one's beard. For the prices one pays for a roomette or a bedroom, this is ridiculous and obviously the people who made this decision have not tried paper pillow cases and paper towels.

Also on the same train they seemed to run out of regular cream and people had to use powdered cream instead. Then I noticed that the luncheon and dinner menus were exactly the same and you only had three main dish choices. This was one of the new electrically converted cars, and while the heat worked properly, the amount of heat that came up made it impossible to touch the ash tray because it was so hot.

William Stroh III
Short Hills, New Jersey

Rail Travel News, Vol. 9, No. 6. May, 1979. Whole number 188.
Copyright © 1979 by Message Media. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $10.50 per year; single copy 45¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston.

ON THE COVER

This illustration is from a current Amtrak newspaper ad promoting "carfree" vacations aboard the train. These ads are headed "This vacation, leave 2 tons of excess baggage at home", alluding to the automobile which is seen weeping as it is left behind at the train station.

THE DEMOBILIZATION OF AMERICA

News summary and analysis

The newspapers are suddenly dominated by the gasoline shortage. Since late April, especially in California where the shortage is particularly acute, citizens have been plagued by difficulties in obtaining gasoline --especially by long lines at gasoline stations, frequent station closures and other problems. And while they are grateful when they find fuel available, they are diverted from the fact that prices have been climbing steeply--now almost one dollar a gallon for premium gas in our area.

There seem to be as many theories about the cause of poor fuel availability as there are theorists. And everyone involved blames everyone else for the problem --the government, the consumer, the oil companies, the station owners, the Arab oil-producing nations. There is a question of why California is hit the hardest, and some suspicion that oil companies are putting pressure on the state to relax its air quality standards to allow the refiners higher production.

While citizens are finding automobile driving more difficult, mass transit facilities are suddenly jammed. People are changing their summer vacation plans, and Amtrak is finding advance reservations running 40% higher than last year. During the week of May 7 Amtrak reservations centers received 1,365,592 calls and were able to handle only 333,850 of them. In the comparable week of 1978, Amtrak got 366,450 calls and handled 342,010. On one day alone--Friday May 11, 1979--Amtrak got 263,569 calls. These numbers do not include calls to individual stations or ticket agents.

In spite of these facts, the federal government is going ahead with its plans to cut back Amtrak, at the same time that it fails to cope with the fuel shortage. The irony of the situation has not gone unnoticed by editorial writers and other opinion makers. For example a Herblock cartoon early this month pictured a line of cars at a gas station marked "Closed". Nearby, Jimmy Carter was nailing up another "Closed" sign on the rail passenger station. "Brilliant planning!" was the cartoon caption. (See also the cartoon on p. 15, relating particularly to the plight of small towns also hit by air service closures caused by airline deregulation. The cartoon is from a town on the route of the PIONEER, slated for discontinuance by the DOT.)

The DOT and other federal agencies don't seem to be able to put two and two together and to see what's happening to our citizens. As one DOT official remarked to us a few years ago, "Maybe the only solution is for people to stop traveling and stay home more." We couldn't believe this statement when we heard it, but now we suspect that the demobilization of America is a hidden aim of the DOT, as in the novel "1984" in which government agencies did the opposite of what they were supposed to do. In California, the state says that massive unemployment would result unless the situation is normalized.

Please turn the page for more on the antics of the DOT.

DENYING AMTRAK NEW EQUIPMENT

In promoting the plan to cut Amtrak's routes by 43%, Transportation Secretary Brock Adams has claimed that a "smaller Amtrak would be a better Amtrak." Adams has also said he wants to improve service on the routes he would keep. Rail supporters say that this is doubtful.

In reality, DOT is setting the stage for Amtrak to be a mere shadow of itself in five or seven years by curtailing Amtrak's Superliner order from 284 cars to 197; by trying to defer to 1983 Amtrak's 1981 plan to purchase new single-level passenger cars; and by attempting to defer placement of an order for high-speed locomotives from fiscal 1980 to 1981.

DOT has persisted in its attempts to reduce Amtrak's capital budget and kill new equipment orders. This could position Amtrak so that equipment constraints will either (1) limit Amtrak's capacity to increase passenger usage in future years, or (2) contribute to such a poor fleet condition that equipment shortages would practically force Amtrak to become still smaller in future years.

It is significant that DOT did not include in its public plan such actions. For example, the DOT's decision to reduce the Superliner order from 284 cars to 197 cars was made on or before Jan 25, 1979, prior to the DOT's release of the final plan on Jan 31. As of this writing, the DOT has not made this planned cut public.

DOT opposes the single-level car purchase in fiscal year 1981. These cars would be used on trains that would remain in the Adams system (BROADWAY LIMITED, LAKE SHORE LIMITED, SILVER STAR). This action would run counter to Adams's claim that the remaining trains would be improved.

Also at issue is DOT's attempt to defer placement of a $26 million AEM-7 locomotive order from fiscal 1980 to 1981. The AEM-7 is a high-speed, lightweight electric locomotive for use in the Northeast Corridor. Why such an action would be taken is puzzling, since Adams has pledged an all-out effort to make the Boston-Washington Corridor a showpiece.

Pressure on Amtrak by the DOT to cut or defer new equipment plans is documented by a number of letters and memos in RTN's hands. The information is supported by hush-hush internal "working papers" at DOT which are not easily available unless one has time to proceed under the Freedom of Information Act.

The DOT equipment proposals have met strong but quiet Amtrak objections.

The Superliner cutback is particularly bothersome. It would keep Amtrak from increasing frequency even on the smaller system proposed by DOT (e.g., Chicago-Kansas City or Chicago-Twin Cities) and would prohibit Amtrak from running "cut-off" cars on busy portions of busy routes (e.g., San Francisco-Reno; Los Angeles-Las Vegas; New York-Albany; El Paso-Los Angeles or Chicago-Carbondale); and would prevent Amtrak from operating special trains which are in demand for sporting events (e.g., Seattle-Portland for Seahawks games).

Further, the Superliner cutback would throw hundreds of workers at Pullman-Standard's Hammond, Indiana plant out of work.

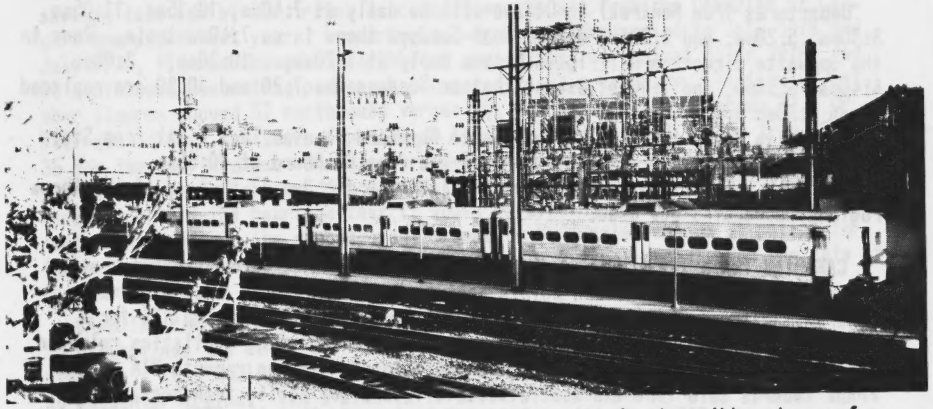
There is also a question as to how much money such a cutback in Superliners would actually save. At this point in the contract, Amtrak would be obligated to pay Pullman what their profit would have been had all 284 cars been produced, and pay for all supplies and materials ordered. All that would be saved would be assembly costs on 87 cars, raising the per-unit costs on the 197 delivered. This would make Amtrak look even more costly or inefficient than DOT has already made Amtrak look.

Amtrak's Alan Boyd is fighting the proposed cutback in Superliners and reportedly is continuing to support the single-level and AEM-7 orders. Mr. Boyd's position on Superliners is as follows: "We want to receive the entire 284 cars. Altho we would not need all of them for the DOT-recommended system, we could lease some to Canada's VIA Rail, then pull them back if more routes were added

in the future or if an energy crisis dictated use of more cars. Besides, it would be foolish to try to cut the order now, what with all the trouble we've had with the manufacturer. It probably wouldn't save us a whole lot of money to cut the order" (quotation paraphrased). At this time, Superliner equipment is operating with only minor problems in the Chicago area.

DOT not only is pulling back on new equipment funding, but it is doing the same on funding conversion of conventional cars to head-end (electrical) power. In a letter from the DOT's Federal Railroad Administration to Amtrak (about March 13), DOT says: "The two most significant changes from your (capital budget) document are that we have deferred approximately $26 million worth of AEM-7 locomotive purchases until FY-81, and we have not funded new low-level equipment purchases in FY-81. We have also deferred certain other items from FY-80 to FY-81 including: (1) $5 million of the item titled 'Facilities (maintenance/stations/O.B.S.S.)'; and (2) all of the line item marked 'additional HEP conversion (non/capital NEC) to free Amfleet (with modifications) for NEC use.' We have also provided for an additional $22 million in HEP conversions in FY-81 as a partial substitute for not funding new low-level equipment purchases in that year."

DOT's refusal to fund conversion of cars to electrical heat to free Amfleet cars for Northeast Corridor use is puzzling, because Amfleet assigned to other routes by DOT's plan (e.g., SILVER STAR) must be moved back to the Corridor in 1982 and 1983 to (1) meet growing ridership demands resulting from the Northeast Corridor Improvement Program, and (2) Amfleet must relieve 68 Jersey Arrow cars



Jersey Arrow cars, such as those seen here on the first northbound run of the CHESAPEAKE on May 1, 1978 at Baltimore, will have to be returned by Amtrak to the New Jersey DOT and replaced by Amfleet cars. Photo by Ken Maylath.

---

when the New Jersey DOT reclaims them to use on former Erie-Lackawanna commuter lines when the change in the overhead electrical current is completed. This unusual refusal to fund Head End Power conversion may mean that DOT thinks trains such as the SILVER STAR running with Amfleet would be discontinued in 82 or 83.

The DOT's Mr. Adams wants us to believe his assumption that Amtrak will be preserved, rejuvenated and ultimately developed in a better manner as a result of a cutback. Unfortunately for him, his remarks during a recent hearing on the cutback plan seemed designed to cast doubt on the essential idea of rebuilding Amtrak. He said that trains waste energy and that it would be cheaper to give its patrons free plane tickets than to subsidize their rail fares (see RTN, last issue). Thus, Adams hardly leaves an impression of an official dedicated to the concept that the nation needs a rail system as an alternative form of transportation.

RAIL CANADA

SUMMER SCHEDULE CHANGES for VIA Rail Canada are generally to take effect Jun 17. Schedule changes normally made on Apr 29 will take place then, and pre-Apr 29 schedules remain in effect in the meantime. The CANADIAN will begin operation out of Montreal only, and the SUPER CONTINENTAL out of Toronto only. Train 1, the CANADIAN, will leave Montreal at 10:15am, Ottawa at 12:50, Sudbury at 8:45pm, Thunder Bay 11:40am, Winnipeg 9:25pm, Regina 6:10am, Calgary 4:15pm, and arrive Vancouver at 11:45am. Train 2 (eastbound operation starts Jun 15) will leave Vancouver at 4pm, Calgary 1:50pm, Regina 11:30pm, Winnipeg 10:05am, Thunder Bay 8:35pm, Sudbury 11am, Ottawa 7:10pm, and arrive Montreal at 9:35pm.

The SUPER CONTINENTAL, train 3, will depart Toronto at 1pm, Sudbury 8pm, Capreol 8:55pm, Winnipeg 9:10pm, Saskatoon 7am, Edmonton 3:15pm, Jasper 8:50pm, and arrive Vancouver at 12:45pm. Eastbound, train 4 will leave Vancouver at 1:40pm, Jasper 7:50am, Edmonton 1:55pm, Saskatoon 9:45pm, Winnipeg 9:50am, Capreol 11:35am, Sudbury 12noon, and arrive in Toronto at 7pm. Of the stations listed above, Sudbury and Vancouver use two stations in each city. Eastbound service on this schedule for the SUPER CONTINENTAL also begins Jun 15.

Effective Apr 29, train service between Senneterre and Noranda-Rouyn and between Chambord and Dolbeau was discontinued by order of the CTC, and buses substituted.

Departures from Montreal to Ottawa will be daily at 7:40am, 10:15am, 11:05am, 3:30pm, 5:20pm, and 9:20pm, except that Sundays there is no 7:40am train. Runs in the opposite direction will leave Ottawa daily at 7:20am, 10:20am, 2:00pm, 4:40pm, 6:30pm, and 7:10pm, except that on Sundays the 7:20 and 10:20 are replaced by an 8:30am train.

Effective May 1 train 177, Ste. Foy to Chambord, leaves Tues & Sat from Ste. Foy at 6:45am, while train 176 lvs Mon & Wed from Chambord at 10:55am.

VIA will be printing a single system timetable for Jun 17 instead of the three regional schedules now used.

* * *

CANADIAN TRAIN TRAVEL increased 12% in 1978 over 1977. Even greater was the increase between Montreal and points east to Moncton--24.4%. East of Moncton, ridership climbed 16.2%, while for Montreal-Toronto traffic was up 11% for a total of 1,402,226 trips. These are some of the interesting statistics released this month in VIA Rail Canada's 1978 Annual Report. In the report, VIA head J. Frank Roberts said that the most effective future for public transportation in Canada probably lies in intermodality. Roberts said that the CTC's decision to postpone closure of the E&N Railway service could lead to serious study of intermodality in other areas of the country: "The extension of the service will allow VIA to work with Transport Canada and the B.C. Government to develop a transportation plan for the Victoria-Courtenay corridor. This plan will determine if rail has a logical function in the area when coordinated with other modes. The passenger transportation problem in this corridor is a microcosm of a national problem. It is hoped that the experience gathered in the development of this plan will be of help in similar studies that are required across the country."

HIGHLIGHTS OF VIA'S year, as recorded in the 1978 Annual Report, include: Mar 31: VIA took over management of CN rail service; Apr 1: VIA became a Crown Corporation, independent of CN; Sep 29: VIA acquired all CN and CP unionized employees and took over CP rail service; Oct 29: VIA became responsible for the Vancouver-Montreal/Toronto transcon passenger service.

VIA'S "WORST" TRAIN service is the Edmonton-Calgary RDC run, VIA Rail said late in Apr at hearings on the proposed discontinuation of the route. Both CP Rail and VIA would like to see the run dropped, but there was a great deal of opposition to that plan at the hearings, much of it coming from Transport 2000

A breakdown on the Edmonton-Calgary route: with rail diesel cars not functioning, a CP Rail diesel locomotive pulls the cars. Photo by Jack Ferry.

Canada and its local affiliates. Proponents of the service produced figures showing that use of the trains as connections to and from the CANADIAN at Calgary increased last year. Comparing a 2-week sampling period in July 1978 and July 1976, figures showed 93 northbound connections as against 31 in 1976, and 80 southbound connecting passengers compared to 62 previously. Similarly, October figures showed 57 northbound versus 20, and 83 southbound versus 21. CP Rail stated that the average passenger load per trip in 1978 varied from 21 to 36 for the four trains. Almost everyone seemed to agree that the service was not top-notch, and a significant breakthru came when the Alberta provincial government told the hearings that it would be willing to subsidize the trains to keep them running. The announcement seemed to be a major change of policy for the ruling Progressive Conservative government. A final decision on the fate of the trains has not yet been made.

CANADIAN RAIL SUPPORTERS are alarmed at VIA's apparent intention to begin work to discontinue the SUPER CONTINENTAL runs across Canada after the May 22 Dominion election. This would leave the CN route via Jasper, Edmonton and Saskatoon with no passenger trains. VIA's plan is to stick with the CANADIAN on the Banff-Calgary-Regina route. A fallback position is to operate the SUPER in summer and winter holiday periods only. VIA also is expected to announce plans to move the CANADIAN from the CP depot to the CN depot in Vancouver, a move which city politicians oppose because passenger trains are removed from the transportation focus being built up at CP, which is the Sea-Bus North Vancouver ferry terminal.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY top officials have told newspapers that they favour dropping the line's passenger service, provided by tri-weekly RDC cars, between Lillooet and Prince George, as an economy measure.

VIA'S SUPER CONTINENTAL and CANADIAN runs both were delayed in late Apr and early May due to re-routings because of problems ranging from derailments and floods to bomb sabotage to CP tracks west of Thunder Bay, Ont.

HEAVY ICE FLOWS in the Cabot Strait reduced CN Marine ferry crossings between Sydney, N.S. and Port-aux-Basque, Newfoundland. Only 166 trips were made in March compared to 208 in Mar, 1978. Overall maritimes ferry loadings rose 4.4% for the first three months of 1979, compared to the same 1978 period.

THE WHITE PASS and Yukon Railway is applying to the CTC for permission to raise passenger fares 10%, citing a decline in traffic.

ONTARIO LIQUOR AUTHORITIES have granted VIA permission to serve drinks to pas-

sengers in coach seats, as the airlines do. The first such service is expected to be introduced on the Toronto-Montreal runs.

CP RAIL IS leasing between 4 and 8 diesel commuter engines from GO Transit to help in a shortage of freight engines.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

BART'S FIRST BRUSH with fire since the disastrous incident that closed the transbay tube recently happened on Sunday, May 13, when a passenger at Oakland's 12th St. station dropped a suitcase on the tracks. It became lodged under a train and carried almost to the MacArthur station, where it shorted out the third rail and created a small fire under the train's third car. The operator moved the train to the platform and instructed all the passengers to detrain. A major delay to the system ensued while debris was cleared from under the train. All concerned had positive words for BART's handling of the situation this time. Meanwhile, the passenger at 12th St. jumped down to the tracks to search for the suitcase and was struck by another BART train, but escaped with minor injuries.

BART HAS PROMISED that the long-awaited direct Richmond-Daly City service will begin no later than Oct or Nov of this year, it was announced May 10.

CITY OF CALGARY, which broke ground for an LRT system in May, 1978, reports construction on the southern leg of the transit system going on schedule. Next January the first of the Siemans-Duwag cars, similar to those on the Edmonton system, will begin arriving, and will be assembled by Calgary workers.

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION on May 2 "reaffirmed" its support for completing the 101-mile Washington Metro rail system, in testimony before a House Committee.

ANOTHER SEATTLE MAN, former attorney Gary D. Gayton, was sworn in Apr 30 as Deputy Administrator of UMTA, and will serve as Acting Administrator until a successor is named for departing UMTA Administrator Richard Page, also from Seattle. Page is leaving to become head of the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority.

THE GASOLINE SHORTAGE in California has been driving public transit patronage up quickly and sharply in the past few weeks. All transit systems in the San Francisco area report markedly increased ridership. Among them is SP, whose commute trains are reported carrying standees. A one-month June trial of a 40% fare discount for occasional riders has been postponed because of heavy ridership. The financial incentive was to be funded by Caltrans and transit agencies of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. In other SP news, the Amtrak engines earlier leased for the commute line have almost all been returned to Amtrak, and all will be back to their owner by June 1.

GO TRANSIT FARES in Toronto went up Apr 29, the base rate rising from 5.4¢ per mile plus 20¢ to 5.9¢ per mile plus 20¢. An increase in operating-cost contracts with CN helped force the fare boost.

A BOEING-VERTOL TROLLEY in Boston, apparently speeding on an elevated curve, derailed Apr 24, injuring "dozens" of passengers. The trolley, about to enter North Station, hit a concrete retaining wall.

A TAXPAYER SUIT against Boeing-Vertol, manufacturers of Boston's LRV trolleys, was filed in Philadelphia Apr 24, seeking $150 million in punitive damages from the manufacturer, on behalf of Boston's MBTA.

TRANSPORTATION BOND ISSUE in the amount of $1.25 billion has been proposed for New York State, to help NY City's transit facilities, and including $200 million for intercity rail freight and passenger service improvements, and $325 million for development of new city mass transit systems. In 1974 a large rail transportation bond issue was approved at the polls.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNI began running Boeing-Vertol LRV trolleys in trial shuttle service on the K-Ingleside line on Apr 23.

LOBBYING TO SAVE THE AMTRAK TRAINS

Excerpts from Apr 3 testimony of Ross Capon, NARP Director, before the House Transportation Subcommittee

In a perverse way, we take some heart from the fact that the DOT perceives the case for its plan to be so shaky that it must resort to misleading and sometimes false statements to justify that plan. Consider the following:

--DOT claims its plan would retain 91% of Amtrak's ridership but in fact has no basis for making this claim because data is not available on passengers connecting between trains. If (to use an extreme example) all riders on the Chicago-Detroit line come from Omaha and Dallas, the Detroit trains retained under the DOT plan would run empty. In any event, the 91% includes the Northeast Corridor (the figure is 67% without the NEC), and--because the passengers lost would be traveling longer distances--the percentage of passenger-miles retained is 80% including the NEC. Finally, the 91% is based on Amtrak's FY 1978 ridership, which was unusually weak because of reduced equipment availability and advertising as well as cut-rate airfares (which are not here to stay).

--The Secretary has testified that "we boarded less than one person a day at Ottumwa, IA, last year". (Ottumwa came up because CBS Evening News featured it when the plan was released, and Ozark Airlines was cutting service there at the same time.) His staff later confirmed that the correct number is 14. Amtrak figures show that, when total ons and offs are counted, the 1977 average was 27½ per day and the 1978 range was from 20.8 in February to 35.9 in August.

--The Secretary has testified that the Washington-New Orleans "Southern Crescent" has low ridership and recently left Washington with 28 people. His staff has not been able to document such a trip, and the following figures indicate such a trip probably never occurred:

1973	157,994	revenue passengers on "Crescent"	
1974	183,405	" "	(energy crisis)
1975	156,574	" "	
1976	157,493	" "	
1977	165,729	" "	
1978	168,865	" "	

Ridership is up every year from 1975, and up 7.8% from '75 to '78. 1978 ridership works out to an average of 231.3 passengers per trip, and Washington is the heavy end of the line.

--The Secretary has testified that the "Southern Crescent" under Southern management had "everything going for it that a train could have". He did not mention (a.) no advertising since mid-1976; (b.) aged cars with unreliable heating and air-conditioning as on most Amtrak long-distance trains; (c.) only tri-weekly service west of Atlanta. Amtrak used savings from eliminating Atlanta switching to extend daily service to New Orleans, thereby increasing revenues since Amtrak's Feb. 1 takeover; (d.) maintenance by Southern of costly station operations separate from Amtrak in Birmingham and Charlottesville. Amtrak has consolidated operations in both cities now for greater passenger convenience and lower costs.

--The Secretary has testified that the "Southern Crescent" is a "fast" train. The timetable calls for a 45.3 mph average speed west and 46.6 mph east, slower than many Amtrak long-distance trains.

--The Secretary has testified that his plan is equitable and "everyone loses something". The fact is that, while 51% of present route miles are losing service, one state -- Nevada -- would end up with more service under the plan than it has today, thanks to addition of the leg through Las Vegas.

--The Secretary has testified that Amtrak is essentially irrelevant to the energy crisis, inconsistent with the information on pages 4 and 5.

--DOT and the Secretary repeatedly state or suggest that the plan removes only low-ridership trains. The most obvious inconsistencies with this,

statement are the "Southern Crescent" (see above) and the New York-Florida route, where the Secretary would cut daily frequencies from three to one and where, according to his own Environmental Impact Assessment, passenger-miles would be 28% less than if present service were maintained. (Even present service levels are inadequate for the demand: Amtrak turned away 5,073 reservation requests during the first week of February for this route; 76,990 requests during the first week of January.)

--The Secretary claims that his network would be used "more intensively" yet he proposes to reduce service frequencies on 2,985 miles of the surviving lines, worsening the ratio of fixed (especially station) costs to earning capacity. Loss of connections, as noted below, would further weaken the surviving trains.

WHY THE PLAN WON'T WORK

Economics and politics both dictate that a viable rail passenger network reach all major metropolitan areas. The DOT plan, however, would pull Amtrak out of Dallas/Ft. Worth, Atlanta, and Cincinnati/Columbus/Dayton. Overall, only 65% of the U.S. population would be within 50 miles of an Amtrak station, compared with 84% currently. The combined factors of higher unit costs (predicted by DOT) and reduced geographical coverage raise obvious doubts about the practicality of passing Amtrak authorizations in the future.

The surviving routes would lose many connections. The marketing situation facing Amtrak is even more acute on this point than is that facing Greyhound and Trailways who, according to ICC, have

"stated that a substantial cut in service would precipitate a further decline by destroying their route network. They contend that the maintenance of an integrated nationwide route structure is essential to preserve their existing level of traffic." (From The Intercity Bus Industry, ICC Bureau of Economics, May, 1978, p. 90.)

Under the DOT plan, the New Orleans-Los Angeles route might not last long because it would lose connections to the East (via the CRESCENT at New Orleans) and Dallas and would remain only tri-weekly, contrary to Amtrak policy and to the Secretary's earlier claims that his preliminary plan would "serve the American public well by providing daily service on all routes".

The Chicago-Seattle route would lose connections in Seattle to Vancouver B.C. and Bellingham WA and would have a same-day connection to but not from Portland. The route would also lose its mail contract because of the proposed end of daily service between Minneapolis and Seattle.

The two Chicago-New York routes and Chicago-Detroit are heavily used by people making connections to and from the West. Under the DOT plan, the number of Western trains arriving Chicago would drop from five and four per day (depending on day of week) to two and one.

The economic impact of losing these connections would be quite severe, since the passengers making connections are generally traveling long distances and therefore paying high fares. We estimate, for example, that loss of the SUNSET/CRESCENT connection alone may cost $468,000 in revenue per year.

The most disturbing single aspect of the plan is the Chicago-California proposal, which is a drastic departure from present practice, DOT's preliminary plan, and anything the private railroads did even when they were trying to attract passengers. The plan is to run a single train between Chicago and Ogden via Kansas City, Denver, and southern Wyoming; thence separate sections on the present route thru Reno, Sacramento, and Oakland, and on a brand new route thru Las Vegas to Los Angeles. This would add 277 miles to the Chicago-Los Angeles run, while reducing the reliability of everything (especially eastbound) with the mid-route switching operation at Ogden.

The public justification for this proposal is that the present Chicago-L.A. route, with unusually high average trip-lengths per passenger, was particularly vulnerable to cutrate air service in 1978. As the Mar 21 Wall Street Journal documents, the 1978 cutrate air fares hardly make a sound basis for developing long-term transport policies. ...the present Chicago-L.A. route is already doing much better than a year ago. It is Amtrak's fastest long-distance train; it is run by one of Amtrak's most reliable contractors--Santa Fe; it provides vital all-weather service in southern Colorado and northern Arizona/New Mexico; and it offers an attractive way to reach the Grand Canyon without an automobile. We understand a local bus company earns the better

McCook, Nebraska, would be one of many locations without rail service if the DOT plan is adopted. Here, the westbound Amtrak domeliner SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR makes a morning stop, running several hours late. Photo by Message Media.

part of its revenue hauling Amtrak passengers between the Flagstaff station and the Grand Canyon and other natural attractions in the area.

The DOT plan would be expensive to implement not only in terms of track and stations, which Amtrak claims have been underestimated by DOT, but also in terms of the normal lead time required to build up ridership on a new route. Furthermore, there is some question about the viability of a Kansas City-Denver run which bypasses Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Even the NARP Board of Directors, which is not bashful about proposing new passenger routes, does not have service across northern Kansas on its ten-year wish list. But to stay on the Santa Fe and serve Pueblo/Colorado Springs would add another 83 miles to an already too-long route. It should be remembered that the UP line across Kansas is not part of UP's mainline freight network, so DOT's proposed Chicago-L.A. service would not only suffer from the 277 extra miles but also a lower average speed.

The DOT scheme would effectively kill the existing market served by the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, including the very-long-haul travelers DOT says predominate on that route, and would substitute service to a limited series of short-haul markets, with the circuitous nature of the route severely limiting marketability of the service to many on-line city pairs (e.g., Kansas-Las Vegas via southern Wyoming is not attractive). Perhaps the planners at DOT believe people forget time exists if they ride long-distance trains. Yet the general trend of Amtrak's experience to date is that, even on long-distance routes, ridership is related to the rapidity of the trip.

In short, we think the Chicago-California scheme is a disaster, and is terribly inequitable, requiring considerable startup costs when scarce funds should instead be concentrated to the extent feasible on routes that have already been "started up". We do support the concept of serving Las Vegas, but not as part of a merry-go-round run such as DOT proposes.

SUBSIDIES

Much has been made of the "heavy subsidies" alleged to be "enjoyed" by rail passengers. The simple fact is that ancient equipment and facilities depress revenues and increase costs, while once-daily-or-less service means high unit costs and low volumes. Amtrak has not benefitted from a big "front-end" investment such as the government has lavished on the air and highway modes. For airport and airway development, Federal aid alone totalled $15.8 billion before the 1971 imposition of user charges. By next September, Amtrak will have received capital funding of only $1.3 billion, of which $206 million is for Superliner cars not yet in service. Furthermore, railroads--unlike air and highway users --don't benefit from the trust fund concept under which (A) user charges are earmarked for further development of the mode that collects them, and (B) right-of-way costs vary directly with the amount of use of the right-of-way.

The government has in the past invested the taxpayers' money to build the world's best highway and air traffic systems. We can afford to do the same for the railroads. Considering the rising price of gasoline, we cannot afford not to!

The public mandate is there, and the first step should be to throw the DOT plan in the wastebasket where it belongs.

AN ANNIVERSARY RAIL EXHIBIT

The closest thing to an eighth anniversary celebration for Amtrak was an exhibit of equipment on May 5 and 6 in conjunction with a fortieth anniversary celebration for the Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal. On Feb 24 and 25, Amtrak held an equipment exhibit in Washington DC, largely for the benefit of legislators who were beginning to consider the controversial DOT plan to cut back the Amtrak system. (On the weekend of May 12-13, Amtrak was having equipment fairs at Harrisburg and Minneapolis-St. Paul, while on May 19-20 a similar exhibit will be held in Boston.)

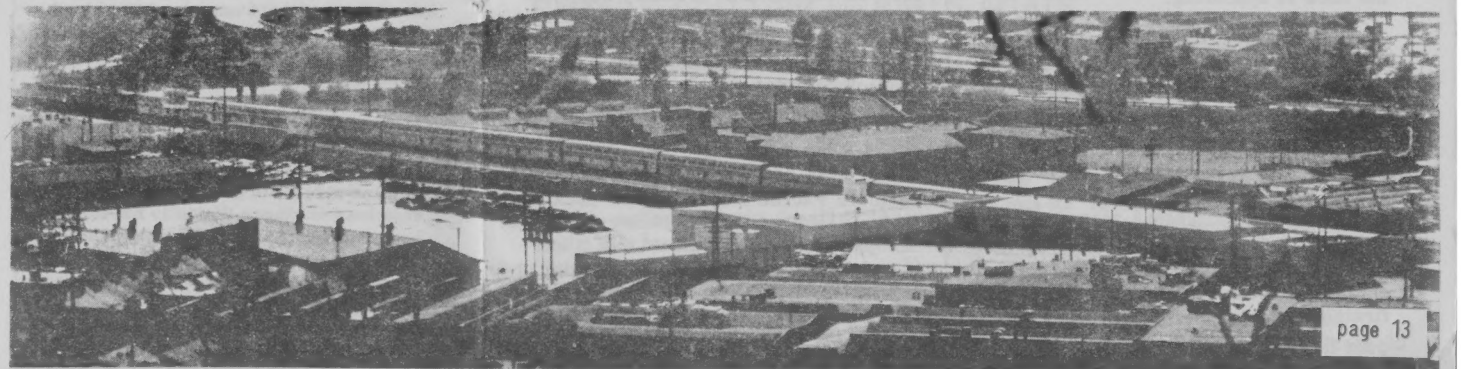
The Los Angeles event featured guest speaker Adriana Gianturco, director of California's Dept. of Transportation, sporting a new hair style (lower photo), and for Amtrak equipment there was a string of conventional cars shown on left of photo below (at right is Amfleet consist of a SAN DIEGAN). The consist shown was, from

Photos by Paul Rayton

right to left in the photo, locomotive 509, sleeper 2655 "Silver Valley", technical training ("Amtech") cars 10001 & 10002, dome observation sleeper 9251 "Silver Penthouse", diner 8033, dome lounge 9350, and coach 5666. While these were shown on track 6, track 5 featured locomotive 223, Amcoach 21254, hi-level coach 9933, and Superliner coach 34035.

This "FiestaRail '79" exhibit also included historic and antique vehicles and artifacts, such as the old Gray Line tour bus and the Pacific Electric red car in the photo above. The PE car, privately owned, is converted to rubber tire operation. Pacific Railroad Society arranged a special train, the "Fiesta Express", which made a one-day roundtrip on May 5 via Santa Ana Canyon to San Bernardino and return via Pomona. In the photo below, the train, including seven hi-level cars, is knifing into the haze and clutter of downtown L.A. on its return run (engines are at extreme left of photo).

Other exhibitors included the Southern California Rapid Transit District, with information on its planned People Mover.



ON FIRST WATCHING SUPERTRAIN

by Alan Crossley

Before sitting down for the premiere of Supertrain, I recalled the similar position of my cousin and his Navy friends years ago when they gathered to watch Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea. Week after week, the crew of the Seaview, ducking shrapnel from exploding control panels and near panic as their craft advanced toward certain disaster, heard Admiral Nelson issue the terse command that would save the ship and incidentally stand atomic theory on its head--"REVERSE THE REACTOR!" Ensuing dialogue was drowned out by the laughter.

Well, so what? Hollywood is nearly synonymous with fantasy, and the foibles of propmen and screen writers alike are well documented, even expected. But recent films have blown open the old standards. Realism and visual sophistication--give or take minor details like characterization and theme--have taken over. And Supertrain, we heard, would live up. Models will not look like models, but will seem real. Now then, will the story?

Cut to a scene from Grand Central Terminal, where Supertrain's inaugural run is about to begin. A graphic flashed to a newly gathered audience (one presumably well-sprinkled with railfans) tells us that in just 22 months a single company has surveyed, graded, tracked, designed, built and tested rolling stock for, and filed an environmental impact statement covering 3000 miles of brand new, super rail line. More laughter, this time from those of us familiar with the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project--but never mind; government is behind that one. Besides, the star of the show is appearing.

Angular, glittering, with a glassed-in cab up front you could sell autos out of, the silver machine throws us for a moment with its sheer size. This is a train? Must be--there's steam leaking up around every car. Stereotypes die hard.

The passengers pile aboard. Not a denim cap or 4449 patch in the lot, we notice. Nor is Frimbo there. Of any omissions these may prove the hardest to believe. Anyway, up in the locomotive we are about ready to go, and the control center has cleared Supertrain for its first 700-odd miles. That's headway enough for a space shuttle, albeit the traffic density of a Rutland, and indeed, a countdown is flashing on the engineer's console. But launch sequence or no, the conductor's "Booooaaaoooorrd!" seems the final word. Supertrain pulls out.

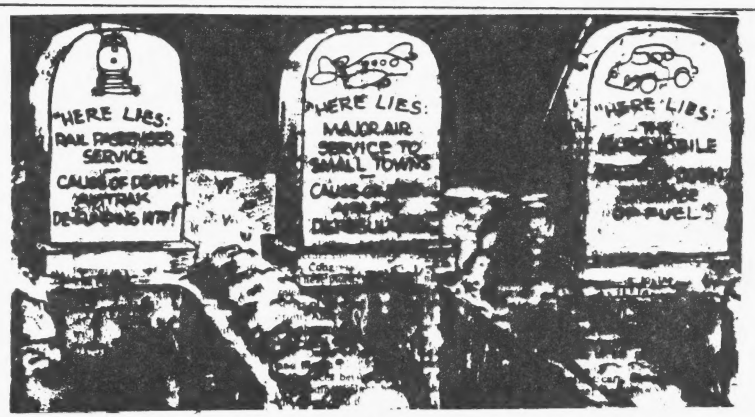
Already shaping up is a confused clash between the razzle-dazzle of ultra-modern machinery and the reliance on steam era railroad cliches to give the audience a point of reference. Intended or no, this apparent conflict is providing more comedy than the script, so we don't complain. But things are looking up. We see the model for the first time as Supertrain sweeps out of Grand Central's tunnel and into the night, and the shot works. The double rows of lighted windows strobe past the camera very effectively as city traffic passes on a bridge overhead. Hollywood has at long last redeemed itself for the opening sequence of The Fugitive.

Back inside, the murder, intrigue, and suspense--such as it is--get underway. Despite never having been on a train before, the jet-setters seem to know the ropes. We assume they are first-timers because we hear no comparisons with the ERIE LIMITED, the GOLDEN STATE ROCKET, or the 5:18 to Far Rockaway. But then with Supertrain's disco, gym, swimming pool, and apartment-size double rooms there is no comparison. In short, Supertrain is a bold, if plastic-coated, vision of the ultimate land cruiser. Unfortunately, having combed the planet for ideas on equipment, NBC sent Central Casting back to The Big Book of Real Trains to find a crew. The conductor is a portly, bespectacled gentleman whose officiousness was at one time probably mistaken for the show's main comic focus. There is one Black, and he is--you guessed it--the porter. So much for vision. At least productivity is no problem. The entire crew, from engineer to bartender, seems to work the whole 36-hour trip to L.A. So much for credibility.

And so it goes. Despite our love for Southern Pacific's scenery, the back projections look, well, like back projections. And just when we are afraid that it has been left in the dust on the Railroad Sound Effects shelf, we hear the dingdingding-ding of a grade crossing signal in the dark outside the windows. Heaven help anyone trying to beat Supertrain to a crossing.

To help out our sense of the journey's progress, or perhaps to make up for the lack of it in the plot, the directors have spliced in several exterior shots of Supertrain streaking across the vast wasteland. And while some of these, particularly the low-level pans, are strikingly realistic, pretty soon we even have to give up on the model. Okay, perhaps at the quoted fare ("450 bucks and no ashtrays," grouses one character, which seems like peanuts for those accommodations) the passengers can expect to be thrown around a bit, but taking a level, ten-degree curve at 150mph--besides playing crack-the-whip with the swimming pool in the last car--is simply flirting too much with some potentially spectacular physics. Whatever was left of the spell is finally broken. Move over, Seaview.

I apologize if all this is harping on minor points unrelated to the thrust of the show, except that there really was no thrust to the show. As drama, it was, well, a sort of Cattlecar Galactica, a promising gimmick still in search of a good script. Even sadder in some ways is that the public gains no more appreciation for the complexities of railroading than it did from the Hooterville Cannonball. Lastly, of course, despite the stereotypes--and perhaps why Frimbo never showed--is our objection that Supertrain is part and parcel of the theory that train travel today has no intrinsic value, that the passenger must be constantly entertained, even distracted, to enjoy his trip. Even Amtrak knows better. In fact, we plainly see the old pointless arrow up on a wall during a scene at LAUPT, so apparently Amtrak doesn't expect to lose its shirt to Supertrain. Neither, we feel, should the competing shows.



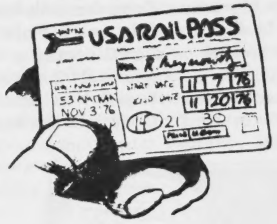
Entitled "The Grim Transportation Reaper", this editorial cartoon from the Pendleton (Oregon) East Oregonian depicts the death of rail passenger service caused by "Amtrak de-funding 1979", the death of major air service to small towns, caused by airline deregulation, and the death of the auto from a shortage of fuel. Reprinted with permission.

EMPIRE BUILDER DERAILS AGAIN

Two more derailments of Amtrak's EMPIRE BUILDER were reported since our last issue. Previous derailments of the train were last November and on Mar 28 of this year. (See RTN #182 & 186.) On Apr 29 the westbound train derailed at a slow speed in a switch yard in New Lisbon, Wisc., giving the engineer and one passenger minor injuries. The 11-car, 2-engine train was carrying 300 passengers, and left the tracks but remained upright, along Wisconsin highway 80, west of the town's downtown area.

The westbound train derailed before 5am on May 6 near Kennewick, Wash. The train was traveling at 70mph when it hit track with no support beneath it, having been washed out by runoff from a collapsed irrigation dike. News reports said that Benton County sheriff's deputies, dispatched to the canal break about 3am, closed the Badger Canyon county road and noticed that the railroad tracks had

been damaged, but failed to notify the railroad. The train, running 2 hours late, derailed spectacularly when the tracks bowed under the train. The tracks did not separate in the accident, and block signals showed clear, as the rails had not been broken. Reports counted the injured as numbering between 23 and 38, none apparently seriously injured. Consist and damage was as follows: engine 246, no damage; engine 242, rear trucks off track; heater car 664, derailed with broken rail thru fuel tank; car 1118 on side; car 1012 perpendicular to 1118 but upright; dorm 2267 "Placid Vale" on left side; coach 5690 derailed but upright; dome coach 9461 derailed but upright; coach 4527 derailed and leaning; counter-lounge 8353 no report; diner 8045 (running with kitchen to rear) suspended by rail in midair over washout; sleepers 2678 "Silver Ridge" & 2675 "Silver Vale" no damage. The accident intensified Amtrak's car shortage again, and the trains are going on a 6-day cycle on the Chicago-Seattle route, eliminating the 7-day cycle in effect over the winter months. Total damage was estimated at $500,000.



SUMMER RAILPASS RATES SET

Amtrak announced on May 3 that effective May 26, U.S.A. Rail Pass rates will increase for the summer, to $289 for a 14-day pass, $379 for a 21-day pass, and $459 for a 30-day pass. If a pass is purchased before May 26, it can be obtained at the present lower rate. Purchasers of the pass must begin use of it within 15 days of purchase. Thus a traveler who buys the pass on May 25 at the cheaper rate may use the 14-day or 21-day pass well into June and the 30-day pass into early July. Amtrak is retaining Family Plan Railpass discounts, but at the increased prices. When a head of family pays full fare for a pass, the spouse and children 12 thru 21 pay one-half price and children 2-11 pay just $50 each, regardless of the length of pass selected.

★ AMTRAK CUTS HEADED FOR ACCEPTANCE

As we go to press, Congress is headed in the direction of not rejecting the DOT plan to cut back the Amtrak system 43%, but rather seems about to increase the Amtrak budget by an amount sufficient to keep 3 or 4 of the 16 routes that the DOT wants cut. On May 8 the House voted 227-196 to reject an amendment by Congressman Dan Glickman of Kansas that would have given Amtrak $73 million more to maintain services. Routes most likely to be retained are the MONTREALER, one of the two NY-Florida trains the DOT wanted out, and possibly one train to Texas.

On May 15 the House Commerce Committee by a vote of 18-7 rejected a disapproval of the DOT plan, effectively killing any disapproval action in Congress. The committee voted to keep 3 or 4 threatened routes, not specifying which ones. The committee defeated a motion to include all routes that showed a ridership increase recently of 20% or more. This motion would have allowed the FLORIDIAN, HILLTOPPER and INTER-AMERICAN to be retained. The committee approved $80 million more in subsidies than DOT wanted for Amtrak, which includes $35 million for the routes to be retained, and $25 million for 403-b routes.

The Senate has been working on legislation that would keep the MONTREALER and the CARDINAL and would retain the LAKE SHORE, BROADWAY LIMITED, SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and SOUTHWEST LIMITED on their present routes, and would add a new train between Los Angeles and Ogden via Las Vegas. Boyd had earlier indicated that the changes wanted in the LAKE SHORE, BROADWAY LIMITED and SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR would cost more to implement than the DOT figured, and couldn't be done by October. Boyd told a recent meeting of NARP officials that they should expect a "somewhat

reduced system." He said that if he had drawn the revised map, it would look quite different from the DOT's version.

Congress has until May 22 to act on the Amtrak funding bill.

On May 14 the California Dept. of Transportation filed a lawsuit to block the DOT cutback plan. The lawsuit claims that the DOT did not file an environmental impact statement relating to the plan; that it did not give Congress all of the information Congress wanted in drawing up the plan; that it violates the clean air act; and that it is an attack on the constitutional rights of people to travel. Caltrans director Adriana Gianturco announced the suit in Washington, althe it was filed in a U.S. District Court in Sacramento, Calif.

Texas and perhaps other states were expected to file similar suits.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

CONGRESSMAN ROBERT DUNCAN of Oregon could go down in history as a person who almost single-handedly killed Amtrak. As chairman of the House Commerce Committee that holds Amtrak's pursestrings, he strongly influenced the May 15 vote not to reject the DOT cutbacks. Previously, he asked the Congressional Budget Office to make a study of energy efficiency, and from it he announced that Amtrak was not energy-efficient except in the Northeast Corridor where it runs electric-powered trains. In what was described as an "unusually blunt" reply, Amtrak said that the report was (to quote Alan Boyd) "inaccurate, misleading, outdated, and absurd." He said that oversimplified assumptions and manipulation of data produced inaccurate conclusions. "With today's gas lines and tomorrow's oil shortages that are certain to come, this report is misleading," said Boyd. Duncan, as an ex-Southern Pacific lawyer, previously participated in train-off proceedings for his employer SP, and reportedly still dislikes passenger trains.....

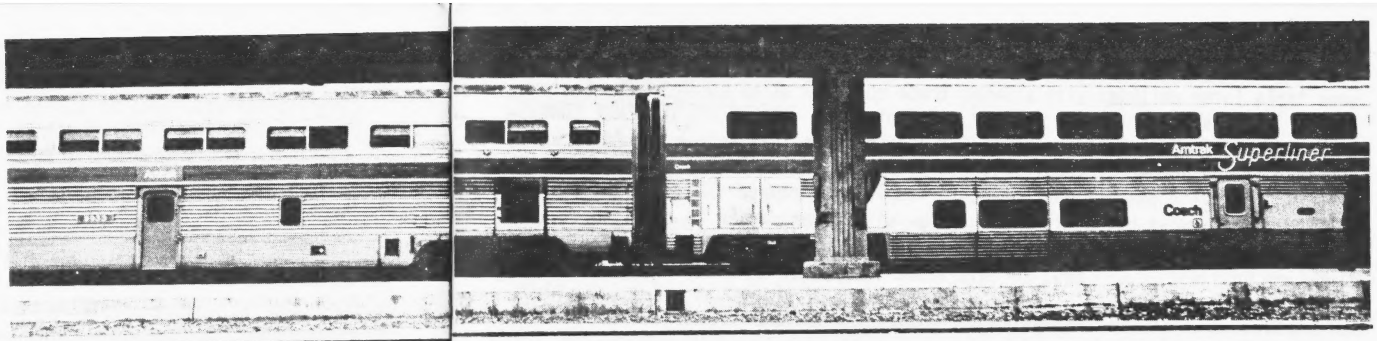
* * *

JOHN R. MARTIN of Atlanta early this month took over the presidency of the National Association of Railroad Passengers from Orren Beatty, who wanted to step down. Martin is described as an "extremely sharp" individual.....

CBS TV NETWORK on its "Sunday Morning" show on May 13 did a 9½-minute piece on Amtrak that was very favorable to the corporation. It included films made in the Northeast Corridor and aboard the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA.....

AMTRAK'S INCREASED PATRONAGE due to the gasoline shortage found the rail corporation running second sections of the SAN DIEGANS the weekend of May 12-13, using conventional equipment--hi-level cars and low-level coaches. It is believed to be the first time that second sections have been run on the route since 1971. The COAST STARLIGHT the same weekend was carrying standees between Portland and Oakland, with a 16-car consist, almost up to the summer limit. Amtrak says it fears a repeat of the 1974 crush that was also caused by fuel shortages. As of May 11 Amtrak noted that the SOUTHWEST LIMITED (scheduled for discontinuance by the DOT) was sold out for 18 days in May. Some NY-Florida runs are already sold out thru the last week of August. The INTER-AMERICAN was already 60% full for the remainder of May..... REBUILT AMTRAK METROLINERS were expected to begin operation the week of May 14, running in sets of 3 snack cars and one club car (with food in one of the snack cars). The reason for this is that the snack cars were delivered ahead of the coaches..... DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION has been sending out localized releases lobbying for the Amtrak cuts. One of them states that the FLORIDIAN costs so much to subsidize that the government could buy each passenger a first class air ticket. A wag counters with "the news release DOT should have written": entitled "New York's Westway costing taxpayers", it states: "The U.S. Government could fund free passage for 42 million Americans on Amtrak between New

Superliner and hi-level cars compared: At the anniversary exhibit at Los Angeles on May 5-6 (see pp. 12-13) Amtrak showed these two cars coupled together. Note that the ex-Santa Fe hi-level coach on the left is somewhat lower in height than the new Superliner. Other differences are apparent in the photo. Photo by Paul Rayton.



York and Miami for the money it would spend to build four miles of highway in New York City, Transportation Secretary Brock Adams said today. The Westway, a highway 4.1 miles long slated to be built on the West Side, will cost taxpayers more than any other highway ever built in the history of mankind. Cost: $1.4 billion. For this amount, we could give 42 million Americans a free ride on Amtrak, provide free meals, free red cap service, free beverages, free pillows, and probably still save money," Adams said. (By some strange coincidence, the $1.4 billion highway cost is the same as the amount Adams says the Amtrak cutback would "save" over a five-year period)..... NEW YORK TIMES'S Tom Wicker has done two more columns on the Amtrak cuts--on May 6 and 13 (see Quotes of the Week, p. 20)..... RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR cutback decision is not expected to be made by the ICC until May 31.....

* * *

THE ARKANSAS ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers on May 7 announced support of a compromise proposal to keep trains running in Arkansas. The compromise route, according to ArkARP Director Bill Pollard, would continue to provide service from Arkansas to Texas, St. Louis and Chicago if the INTER-AMERICAN is discontinued. A single train would operate, combined, between Chicago/St. Louis and Little Rock/Memphis, rather than the two separate trains now running. At Memphis the train from Chicago and St. Louis would split into two, one section serving Little Rock and Texas, the other running thru Mississippi to New Orleans. No change of trains would be required in Memphis..... NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN for Amtrak, elected Apr 25, is Harry T. Edwards of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is a law professor at the University of Michigan Law School and a faculty member of the Institute of Educational Management at Harvard University. Nominated to Amtrak's Board by President Carter in Oct 1977, Edwards is serving a term that will expire in Jul 1980. He replaced Donald P. Jacobs, no longer a board member..... AMTRAK'S FUEL TENDER testing program will be expanded, the Amtrak Board decided on Apr 25. It approved $331,-100 in funding to convert three more "out of service" locomotives into tenders and to modify 16 more locomotives for fuel tender compatibility. Amtrak found that the fuel tender testing program last year on three routes was successful. On the Washington-Miami, Chicago-Seattle and New Orleans-Los Angeles routes the tender-equipped trains were able to operate without intermediate fueling stops. Construction of the three tenders will be finished this fall, and testing will be done on the SILVER STAR for a 90-day period between Washington and Miami.....

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC commute line in our area is getting some attention unwanted by the railroad. Besides discount fares set by county and state agencies and subsidized by them, San Mateo County has erected billboard ads for the trains. Caltrans is searching for more equipment to expand the trains, now beginning to overflow with riders in the gasoline crunch. SP added one ex-SUNSET coach to the trains in the past weeks..... INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION remains with five of its 11 seats vacant, reports the Wall Street Journal, and a sixth temporarily

filled by a member whose term has already expired..... MICE HAVE BEEN a recurring problem in Amtrak food cars this winter and spring. In late April another diner was bad-ordered at Seattle for mice..... WE EXPECT SUPERLINER cars with makeshift food service bars to be assigned to the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and the MOUNT RAINIER in May, to allow release of Amfleet equipment for use elsewhere. The PIONEER should remain Amfleet unless elimination of the sleeper can be engineered. The Amfleet cars may go to San Diego, where 10-car trains are being operated and standees are still a problem (11 of 24 SAN DIEGANS the weekend of May 5-6 carried standees). Some may be assigned to the SAN JOAQUIN, but others will go East..... AMTRAK IS SELLING off "surplus" cars again, with a list having been sent recently to private car buyers. We do not have car numbers available.....

* * *

BESIDES EDMONTON-CALGARY planned discontinuance, Canadian train-off hearings have been held this month for the Regina-Saskatoon-Prince Albert service, and they are reported coming up for Saskatoon-The Pas and Winnipeg-Thompson-Churchill.....

SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION TRAIN ran on May 4 from Boston's North Station to New Hampshire. The train was arranged by the MBTA as a demonstration of rail commuter service between the two states. It made stops in Nashua, Manchester, and Concord. An advance train made a test run the preceding day..... THE NATIONAL LIMITED, train 31, derailed one car at Osage Junction, Missouri, just east of Jefferson City, at 7:45pm on May 10. The car was removed and the train proceeded. There were no injuries reported. Consist of the train was engine 265, baggage 1265 & 1237, sleeper 2917 (derailed), food car 20232, and Amcoaches 21812, 21879, and 21800.....

NEW SYSTEM TIMETABLE for Amtrak was issued Apr 29. Similar in appearance to the previous (Oct 29) timetable, it is printed in two shades of green, instead of the green and brown of the last one. Regional timetables have appeared too. The timetable for Midwest Corridor Services (Form 12), dated Apr 30, erroneously contains the Rock Island trains that were earlier discontinued..... PEORIA'S STATE SENATOR PRESCOTT BLOOM has said that he still believes that Amtrak service will start up on the Chicago-Peoria route, despite the system cutbacks..... A REVIVAL OF rail service to Monterey and Santa Cruz, Calif., seemed all but dead until a bill was approved on May 1 by the state senate Transportation Committee, providing for purchase of 2.1 miles of SP line in Monterey County that SP has abandoned. The bill is numbered SB 648..... THE EMPIRE BUILDER has its 50th anniversary on June 10, and a celebration will be held aboard..... NORTH COAST HIAWATHA was detoured due to flooding in North Dakota on Apr 18. Due into Chicago that date, it arrived at 5:28am on Apr 19. The detour was Glendive MT-Snowden-Williston ND-Minot, then the freight line thru New Rockford to Fargo. Consist of the detoured train was engines 247 & 243, heater car 661, cars 1269, 1087, 2401, 4550, 9465, 9474, 4549, 9331, 8096, 2670, 2656, and 4544..... DENVER IS READYING itself for Superliner cars. The overhang in the canopies over tracks 1 and 2 have been partially removed to allow extra room, and plug-in stations for the electric power have been recently installed.....

THE SOUTHBOUND MONTREALER collided with a 4-wheel drive vehicle on May 1 at a crossing at Charlestown NH, and 5 people in one family died in the vehicle. The same train later collided with alumber truck about 50 miles north of Charlestown, but no injuries were reported in that accident..... INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION said in its report to the President and Congress that Amtrak had "a marked decrease in the number of complaints (in 1978), an indication of greater satisfaction with Amtrak's overall performance." Complaints dropped 43%. Cut the system 43% and maybe you'll get another such drop--with fewer people to complain.....

COMING NEXT ISSUE: Beyond the DOT cuts--where do we go from here? (Contributions are invited)..... News in this issue is updated thru May 15, 1979. Last issue was mailed Apr 26-27.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Kansas City May 10: engines 505, 526; cars 2622 "Pacific Ocean" (deadhd), 1220, 9994, 9922, 9959, 9961, 9982, 9912, dome 9354, 2217 "Indian Pony", dome 9225, 2621 "Pacific Northwest", (on at K.C.:) 1228. Same, Apr 22: engines 523, 518; cars 1221 (on at K.C.), 8101 (deadhd), 1105, 9995, 9929, 9962, 9953, 9975, 9983, 9933, 2213 "Indian Flute", 2610 "Pacific Falls", 2215 "Indian Maid", dome observation sleeper 9251 "Silver Penthouse".

*ONR train 584, Rouyn Apr 13: engine 1501 (F unit); cars 702 combine, coach 836 "Polar Bear" (5 crew, 5 passengers).

*Amtrak GG-1 locomotives currently numbered 900-929 will be renumbered 4900-4929; the 900-929 numbers will be reserved for the new AEM-7 GM-built locos.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, Los Angeles Apr 29: engines 616, 511; cars 1095, 9950, 9951, 9919, 5601, 3395, 8035, 2866 "St. Johns River", 2856 "Seneca River", deadhds 10600, 8105.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Apr 29: engines 618, 533; cars 1220, 1500, 4886, 4851, 4509, dome 9479, 4532, 4488, 4491, 4483, dome 9373, 8072, 2614 "Pacific Heights", 2863 "Holston River".

*CAVALIER, VIA train 59, Montreal-Toronto Apr 5: engine & baggage nos. unknown; coach CN 5504, coach lounge VIA 3024, Dayniter VIA 5733, slpr VIA "Fortune Bay", slpr VIA "Edmonston", deadhds CP slpr "Chateau Rouville", CP Skyline dome 517, CP dome lounge slpr "Assiniboine Park" (running backwards), CN business car 5102.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, Chicago Apr 9: engines 417, 414, 442 (E units); cars 1117, 2552 "Brooklyn Bridge", 5640, 5628, 5630, 5643, 5218, 3302, 8804-8805 twin unit diner, 2606 "Pacific Command", 2006 slumbercoach.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Reports from all over show that real and imagined gasoline shortages are producing more customers for public transportation, including Amtrak; and these reports come on top of statistics showing substantial Amtrak ridership increases before the shortages threatened. Surely the future demands expanded and improved rail service as one part of an energy-efficient transportation system; but this feckless Administration is fixed only upon the $1.4 billion it says the cuts will save in five years (less than $300 million a year). Drive on, America."

--Tom Wicker in New York Times, May 13.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"...Amtrak's the way to go, America. Amtrak Station, 300 North 3rd & C Sts./ Amtrak Station, 10th & North E Sts., Richmond/Call toll-free, 800-621-0353."

--Amtrak ad in Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch Apr 29, giving information for Richmond, Indiana, stations.

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

Increase over previous year:	7.5%	8.6%	4.5%
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	DECEMBER 1978	JAN 1979	FEB 1979
Metroliners	153,392	154,809	127,402
Northeast Corridor Conventional	439,179	417,469	373,718
New Haven-Springfield	27,884	27,433	26,129
New York-Philadelphia	174,101	203,242	166,330
Philadelphia-Harrisburg	78,328	81,713	78,182
New York-Harrisburg	15,908	19,412	14,350
Total Northeast Corridor	888,792	904,078	786,111
SHORT DISTANCE			
New York-Buffalo/Detroit	62,931	57,444	54,131
Chicago-St. Louis	18,601	16,028	14,564
Chicago-Milwaukee	25,130	20,202	19,255
Chicago-Detroit	40,793	35,088	31,718
Chicago-Carbondale	14,590	12,341	12,432
Chicago-Quincy	8,209	6,351	6,949
Los Angeles-San Diego	61,652	58,442	61,846
Seattle-Portland	9,524	4,860	5,523
Seattle-Vancouver	6,080	4,169	3,357
Washington-Cincinnati	5,122	5,413	5,161
Washington-Martinsburg	20,653	22,627	17,831
Oakland-Bakersfield	7,532	4,442	5,446
New York-Montreal	9,825	9,054	8,497
Chicago-Port Huron	9,708	6,765	5,573
Chicago-Dubuque	5,053	3,794	2,890
St. Paul-Duluth	3,499	2,549	3,633
Total Short Distance	308,902	269,569	258,806
LONG DISTANCE			
Washington-Montreal	30,687	29,962	27,601
New York-Florida	75,613	58,527	63,190
Chicago-New York/Washington	22,410	14,074	10,962
Chicago-Cincinnati-Washington	10,949	7,645	5,710
Kansas City-New York/Washington	20,497	15,670	10,450
Chicago-Seattle (N)	20,782	12,372	9,695
Chicago-Seattle (S)	20,417	13,795	9,652
Chicago-San Francisco	28,468	19,941	19,072
Chicago-Los Angeles	30,209	18,644	13,504
Chicago-Houston	24,212	15,212	13,466
Chicago-New Orleans	21,257	17,984	15,814
Chicago-Florida	14,844	10,206	9,263
Chicago-Laredo	13,315	12,092	9,052
Los Angeles-New Orleans	9,869	7,561	5,846
Los Angeles-Seattle	45,146	33,549	30,144
Chicago-New York/Boston	27,645	17,931	13,102
Boston-Newport News	53,152	46,319	43,667
New York-Savannah	35,947	30,010	28,966
Seattle-Salt Lake City	16,606	12,516	11,232
Boston-Tri-State	4,688	3,545	3,504
Total Long Distance	526,713	397,555	12,083 (New York-New Orleans)
			365,975
SPECIAL TRAINS	4,451	4,350	6,621
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,728,858	1,575,552	1,417,513

RAILROAD SHOW!

BUY, SELL & SWAP ALL RAILROADIANA ITEMS

—Sponsored by the National Association of Timetable Collectors—

Sunday, May 20 • 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Ramada Inn - Route 5 - North Haven, Conn.

(Washington Avenue — Exit 12 on I-91)

READY FOR IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT!!!

Amtrak

The 1978-79 AMTRAK ANNUAL

- 160 pages, over 300 photographs.
- large 8½x11 format, softbound.
- full-color covers.
- complete rosters including engines, cars, and work equipment.
- official Amtrak consists.
- maps, charts and diagrams
- 16-page 1979 supplement sent **FREE** when published.

$12.95 + $1 postage and handling.

Rail Transportation Archives
P.O.Box 1970
San Francisco, CA 94101

BOOKS

Two new booklets of special interest to the rail traveler have appeared: they are route brochures for the SAN DIEGANS and for the Oakland-Los Angeles portion of the COAST STARLIGHT run. These "From Your Window" Travel Guides were written by Richard Lindheim of Los Angeles, an RTN reader, and published by LTP Enterprises there. One of the most appealing features of the booklets is the series of aerial sketches of the entire route, putting the traveler's location in perspective. The descriptions of each point are interesting and informative, but there's a glaring error in the very first sentence of the STARLIGHT book: "The COAST STARLIGHT passes through Alameda..." Booklets are available at $1.75 each at most stations on these routes, or by mail for $2.50 from Let's Travel Tours (see Express Ads).

RAIL FANTRIPS

May 19: "Elegance"--rolling benefit trip on Chicago's Elevated system to raise money to retain and improve the Union Loop El. Two 1922 cars used; wine, snacks & music incl. $15. Friends of the El, PO Box 87132, Chicago IL 60680.

Jun 2-3: Rail-bus tour San Francisco to Sequoia & Kings Canyon Nat'l Parks, using Amtrak's SAN JOAQUIN. Overnite at Giant Forest Lodge. $85 double occupancy, $98 single. NRHS Central Coast Chap., PO Box 8407, San Jose CA 95155.

Jul 7-8 and Aug 25-26: Gold Country Weekends. SAN JOAQUIN & bus to Sierra Railroad from San Francisco & Eastbay; incl. lunches, overnight accommodations, etc. $74 & up. Great Western Tours, 639 Market, Suite 900, San Francisco CA 94105.

Sep 14-17: 1979 A.R.M. Convention, Edmonton, Alberta. Full convention program $70 if postmarked before Jun 15. Alberta Pioneer Rwy Ass'n, Box 6102, Station C, Edmonton T5B 4K5. (Tours available from Great Western Tours, address above.)

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO SUBSCRIBERS

Effective June 1, 1979 the yearly subscription rate for Rail Travel News will be increased to $12.00 per year, for 24 issues. The single copy price will be 50¢. We regret the necessity of increasing rates, but inflation continues to push all our costs upward, especially those associated with printing. The most nearly comparable railfan publication now costs 75¢ per issue, so RTN is still bargain-priced by comparison.

EXPRESS ADS

TRAINS!!! We know them!!! We ride them!!! We sell train tickets!!! Call us for tickets and reservations for your next trip!!! GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994. P.S. We sell air tickets, too.

TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

FREE LEAFLETS on Transport 2000 Canada, on freight trains and the environment, and current railway timetable "fliers." Write to: Membership Services, TRANSPORT 2000 CANADA, Box 300, Terminal A, Ottawa, K1N 8V3, Canada.

ATTENTION U.S.A. RAILPASS TRAVELERS--Ex-Amtrak employee tells how you can reserve sleeping accommodations when using the Pass without waiting 'til last minute. A must if you're planning a Railpass excursion--don't sit in a coach when you can take Amtrak lying down. Send $3.95 for copyrighted narrative, "The Sting," for the inside story. PGN, Inc., Dept. P-74, 323 Franklin, Suite 804, Chicago IL 60606.

LOW RATES on Amtrak excursion and USA Rail Pass expire May 25th. Purchase by May 25th, but travel as late as July 7th. Reserve through the RAIL experts, LET'S TRAVEL TOURS, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. Phone 714-787-9350.

BEARCAT SCANNER SALE Model 250 reduced from $399 to $319.00, model 210 from $299 to $219.00, model 4-6 hand held, regular $169, now $139.00 All include UPS shipping. Add 6% California sales tax. Visa/Master Charge accepted. LET'S TRAVEL, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. Phone 714-787-8350.

COAST STARLIGHT guide book "from your window": a detailed route description for the traveler between Oakland and Los Angeles. Includes maps and drawings of views seen from the train window. $2.50 includes tax and shipping in padded mailer. Also SAN DIEGAN guide now available, same format, covering trip between San Diego and Los Angeles. $2.50; or $4.00 for the set of two guides postpd & tax included. LET'S TRAVEL TOURS, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516.

Up-to-date AMTRAK LAW/$8/Robert J. Swan/Box 1866/Long Beach CA 90801.

Mile High RAILFAIR, Denver, CO July 7 & 8 America's "Premier" railroad show featuring railroadiana, models, layouts, railroads, photo contest, authors, artists, railroadiana dealers, movies, door prizes including tickets for Rio Grande Zephyr. Approx. 90 exhibitors. Addition this year is a railroad art show featuring America's BEST artists, many original works on display. Send #10 SSAE w/30¢ postage for details to N.R.H.S., P.O. Box 5181 TA, Denver CO 80217, Dept. RTN.

TROLLEY TRAILS books: Volumes 1-Yakima, 2-Seattle, 3-Portland, 4-Tacoma/Spokane, 5-Montana/Utah, 6-Western Canada, $3 each, prepaid in U.S. Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Brothers Publications, P.O. Box 712rtn, Yakima WA 98907.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.